

Reference

Morgenstierne, Georg. 1955. A Khowar tale. Indian linguistics 16 (Chatterji jubilee volume).163-69.

A KHOWAR TALE

BY

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Khovar, the principal language of Chitral and the north-westernmost outpost of Indo-Aryan, is of considerable linguistic interest. On the one hand on account of its numerous archaic-sounding tadbhavas and grammatical forms, such as *ashru* tear, *khatau*, *zatau* mouse (Skt. *khala-pā* "threshing-floor cleaner"); *ispagh* pauper (Skt. *asvaka*); *ser kura sher*? where is the bridge—a most useful phrase for a traveller in Chitral—(**setuh kutah sete*?); *oshoi* it was (Skt. *asayat*), to mention only a few. On the other hand Khovar has adopted many non-Indo-Aryan elements, as well Iranian, of various age and provenience, as of unknown origin. This composite character of the language does not, to my mind, override the fact that the central core of words and forms are definitely Indo-Aryan. The nearest neighbour and closest relative of Khovar is Kalasha, with which language it shares a number of characteristic isoglosses, e.g. the preservation of augmented preterites, the change of *-t-* > **ḍ*, and further to *r*, or *l*, and the development of a Past Participle of the type **karitaka* > **kardao*, from which Khov. *kardu*, and Kal. *k'ada*. In both languages this participle is also used as a finite verb.

So far no original Khov. prose text has been published, with the exception of the 8 lines of Specimen II in the LSI. And Khan Sahib Abdul Hakim Khan and Capt. B. E. M. Gurdon's Translation of the Ganj-i-Pukhto into the Khovar Dialect (Calc., Off. Superint. Govt. Print., 1902) is not easily accessible. A few short songs have been published by Biddulph and others.

I have therefore thought that a Khovar tale might be acceptable as a greeting and a token of admiration and gratitude from an old friend from Uttara-patha, or Nor-way, being at the same time a message from the Indo-Aryan Uttarapatha.—Most of the Khovar tales I have taken down (and hope to publish some day) are very long. I therefore had to choose a short one for this paper, and it can of course exemplify only a small number of characteristic features of Khovar. The tale was told to me in Chitral in 1929, by Muhammad Zarin from Shagram in Turikho, at that time an elderly man, and for many years a resident of Chitral Village. He was a very good and intelligent informant.

I have, for practical reasons, adopted a very simplified transcription, with a minimum of diacritical marks. *Sh, zh* denote palatal fricatives, *c, j* palatal affricates, and *ṣh, ṣh, ʕ*, the corresponding "cerebrals". Note also cerebral *l*. *X, gh* are velar fricatives, *th, ph, kh, ch, ʕh* are aspirates. I write *r* also before *t*, but in this position it is unvoiced, and sometimes approaches to *h*, or *x*.

Non-phonemic variants of the vowels have not been distinguished, even when this is the case in my original notation. Quantity appears to be non-relevant, stressed vowels being frequently heard as long. But in a few words stressed *a* (or *ʌ*) was never noted as long (e.g. *ha-se*, *ha-te* etc. that; *amus* day, *ḡaq* boy), and it is possible that there are really two "a"-phonemes.—In this text I have only occasionally noted the rising tone, in most cases belonging to words with actual, or original aspirated initial.

The Skeleton Grammar of Khowar given in the LSI, will suffice for the understanding of most of the forms occurring in this tale.¹ A few additional remarks may be helpful:

NOUNS. Locative I ("Inessive") in *-i*; Loc. II ("Adessive") in *-a*. Abl. of inanimate nouns in *-ar*, or, with additional particle *-i* here, hither, *-ari*.—Nom. Plur. Inanimates and some animates have suffix zero. Other animates have *-an*. Note *brar-gini* brothers, and *zhi-zhau* sons.—Obl. Plur. adds *-an*, e.g., *parian* fairies, obl. *parianan*.

PRONOUNS. Nom. Sing. *ha-se* that; obl. sing. (*ha*)-*tagho*; nom. plur. *ha-tet*; obl. plur. *ha-tetan*. As an adjective; Obl. Singh., Plur., Nom. Plur. *ha-te*. *Ha-ya* this; Obl. Plur. *ha-mitan*. *Hes* (Adj. he) that, (the one just mentioned?), Obl. Sing. *horo*.—*Ka* who, somebody; *kara* which, whoever; *kya* what; *kya(r)ax* what, something; *kanduri* how many, some.

VERBS. Imper. 2. Sing. in *-e*, of Causatives in *-awe* (< *-āpaya*), irregular: *det* give. Imper. 3. Sing. in *-ar*.

Pres.—Fut. and Def. Pres., v. LSI.

Pret.—LSI *asistam* I was, etc. has been reduced to *asitam*, or even *astam*. Note the augment in *o-betai* he could.

Perfect. Absolutive + Present of Auxiliary. E.g. *chiti sher* is broken (*sher*, not *asur* because inanimate subject).—Pluperfect: *pori asitai* had fallen asleep = was asleep.

1. Cf. also the present author's "Some Features of Khowar Morphology", *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, XIV, pp. 5-28; 1947.

Habitual Imperfect. Noun of agency in -ak + Past Auxiliary *biretam*, 3. Sing. *birai*, 3. Plur. *birani*. According to my friend Wazir Ali Shah, Government Treasurer, Chitral, who for several years has been my correspondent, and has with great kindness, patience and intelligence given me much valuable information about Khowar, *biretam* "is generally used in cases where something is told as a heard-of or alleged matter, like in stories. E.g. *Hamid di hatara asitai* Hamid was also there, but *Hamid di hatara birai* Hamid is also reported to be there, or happened to be there."

Absolutive: (1) Root (*bi*, *re*, *de*); (2) in -i (*kori*, *nishi*, *tori*, etc.); (3) in -ti (*chiti*, *zhuti*, *biti*, *giti*).

Infinitive. In -ik, inflected in obl. cases, -o, -a, etc.

Past Participle Passive. In -in (*pets-in*).

Perfect Participle in -iru (-*rdu*), from -itaka, also used as a finite form, is not represented in this text.

TEXT

1. 'I badsh'a ast'ai. H'atogho sut² zhizh'au ast'ani.³ 2. 'I
One king there-was. His seven sons there-were. One (-of-them)
'olati b'oko s'ar bir'ai. H'ase t'ato te d'ish⁴ bir'ai. 3. Tan
a-poor wife- from was. He (his-)father-to displeasing was. (Before)
gh'eci lak'ak bir'ai. 4. Hate badsh'o negh'oro g'ona i
his eye not (the-king) used-to-admit (-him). That king's castle- near a
l'u⁵ gurz'en bir'ai. 5. H'atet 'i ch'uyo ispr'u kor'i
big garden was. They (=the trees) (in)-one night blossoms having-made,
buluci bit'i ch'uci b'iko poc'ak bir'ani. 6. Magar
unripe-fruit having-become, morning on-becoming, used to ripen. But
k'a posh'ak. n'o bir'ani. Na-zh'ibiko b'ak bir'ani.
anybody did-not-use- to- see-(them). Not-eating-for they-used-to-be.
7. Ch'uyo t'an hate mew'an pari'an hatetan ist'or
At-night by-themselves those fruits the-fairies (and) their horses
zhuti khuli'ak bir'ani. 8. 'I 'anus badsh'a tan zhizh'auan te re'tai:
having-eaten used-to-finish-off. One day the-king his sons- to said:
9. "K'ara ki ma h'aya gurz'eno mew'an y'or-dika p'at ki w'al
"Whoever < who > my this garden-of fruits sun-set- until who guardian

2. Ordinary form: *sot*.

3. Or: *birani*.

4. First: *napisan*.

5. Ordinary form: *lof*.

- h'oi, -awa h'alogho te b'oh merab'ani kor'om." 10. 'I zhau has-become, I him- to much favour shall-make." One son
 bagh'ai⁶ 'i ch'uyo w'al h'oi. 11. Ch'uei b'iko m'ewa went, one night guardian he-became. Morning- on-becoming the-fruits
 kh'ul h'oni, w'al b'iko n'o 'obetai. 12. Hase 'i vanished became (-were), a-guardian to-be not he-was-able. That one
 zhau bagh'ai, h'ase di w'al b'iko n'o 'betai. (other) son went, he too a-guardian to-be not was-able.
 13. Hase 'i ch'uyo hase 'olat'i kim'erio s'ar zh'au ki hase badh'oo That one night he, the-poor woman- from son, who < he > the-king's
 gh'eca-d'osh osh'oi, h'ase w'al b'iko bagh'ai, 14. Gurz'ena b'i eye-sore was, he guardian to-become went. To-the-garden having-gone
 k'an tu us'i h'al hoi. 15. Ch'uyo har'abara 'i sh'a ist'or a-tree-into having-climbed he-waited. At-midnight a black horse
 zhindr'i h'ai, mew'an zh'ibika c'okitai. 16. Hate k'ano m'ula having-neighed came, the-fruits to-eat began. That tree-below
 git'i hase d'ag kan'ari mahm'ez kur'i ist'oro kr'ema having-come the boy from-the-tree spurs having-made the-horse's back-at
 pr'ai. 17. Ist'or d'etai, hase d'ag c'ali c'ok'i rau-r'au struck. The-horse ran, the boy the-mane having clasped, quick
 bit'i h'al h'oi. 18. Ist'or d'etai. Ist'or having-become, stayed (on the horse). The-horse ran. The-horse
 d'ago te r'etai ki: "Tan matl'abo l'uo d'et, t'a ky'a ki k'orum sh'er, the-boy-to said: "Your design tell (-me), your whatever work is,
 m'a l'aaka!" 19. Hase d'ag r'etai ki: "Ma t'at tan gh'eci n'o to-me leave!" The boy said: "My father his eye-before not
 l'aa-koyan." 20. Hase ist'or tan cal'ari 'i dr'o n'ei admits (-me)." The horse its mane-from one hair having-drawn-out,
 hate d'ago te pr'ai: "Ta ky'a ki zar'urat h'oi, h'aya dr'oo ang'ara⁷ the boy-to gave: "For-you whatever need arises, this hair into-the-fire
 tar'awe. 22. Ta h'ase k'orum b'oi." bring (=throw). For-you that task will-become (=succeed)"
 23. Ist'oro l'akhitai d'ag. 24. Ch'uei b'iko The-horse (obj.) left the-boy (subj.). Morning on-becoming,
 m'ewa p'ocitani. 25. Badsh'ao x'abar ar'eni ki: the-fruits ripened. To-the-king news they-made (=brought):
 26. "Ta h'ase 'olat'i b'oko s'ar zh'au, han'un gurz'eno w'al osh'oi, "Your that, the-poor wife-from son, to-day the-garden's guardian was,

6. First: Zhizhau baghani the sons went.

7. First: ph'era into the ashes.

- m'ewa p'ocitani. 27. Ch'ini badsh'o pr'ush'a
the-fruits have-ripened. Having-picked (them) the-king before
al'eni,⁸ badsh'a b'oh xosh'an h'oi, hate zhaw'o t'an g'ona m'ashkitai,
they-brought, the-king very happy became, that son himself-near he-called,
b'oh mehrab'ani ar'er. 28. Zhizh'auan te r'etai ki: "Fə'lanki zhagh'aa
much favour he-made. (His-)sons-to he-said: "At-a-certain place
badsh'o zh'ur s'orum plinz'o p'etsuran. 29. K'aa ki ist'oro soro
a-king's daughter a-gold(en) ball throws. Whosoever a-horse-on
nish'i h'atogho ki g'anitai, h'atogho 'aloyan."
having-sat-down(=riding) her <who> catches, her he-shall-take-away."
30. Zhizh'au rah'i ar'eni, istor'an soro nish'i. 31. H'ase gh'eca-d'osh zh'au
The-sons starting made, horses-on riding. That odious son
di kh'u'u guth'o soro nish'i h'atetan sum bagh'ai. 32. Ky'awat ki h'aya
also a-lame pony- on riding them- with went. When this
zhagh'a t'oritani badsh'o zh'ur h'ate s'orum plinz'o p'etsitai. 33. Ch'ik
place they-reached, the-princess that gold(en) ball threw. They-all
tan ist'oran hate plinz'o te d'eitani. 34. Magar n'o 'betani g'aniko.
their horses that ball-towards let-run. But not they-could catch-it.
35. H'asegh'eca-d'osh zh'au hate istor'o dr'oo ang'ara tar'eitai. 36. Filh'al
That odious son that horse's hair into-the-fire he put. At-once
hase pari'anan ist'or h'atera t'oritai.⁹ 37. Hase d'aq h'ate soro nish'ai.
that the-fairies' horse there arrived. The boy it- on sat-down.
38. Plinz'o te d'eitai. 39. Plinz'o g'anitai, usht'uritai.
The-ball-towards he-let-(it-)run. The-ball he-caught, he-ran-away.
40. Badsh'o zh'ur h'atogho kab'ul ar'er: "h'oro 'awetan", r'e. 41. H'ase
The-princess him accepted: "him I-have-taken", saying. The
d'aq usht'uritai. 42. P'ona b'i togho dos'i al'ani.
boy fled. On-the-road going, him having-caught they-brought.
Kum'oro¹⁰ h'atogho sum rah'i ar'er. 43. Hate pari'anan ist'oro s'oro nish'i
The-girl him- with starting-made. Those fairies' horse-on riding,
j'ust biti bagh'ani. 44. 'I zhagh'a bi,
united being they-went-off. To-one place having-gone,
b'as g'anitani. 45. Ch'uyo hate sh'ak brarg'ini hate d'aqo
night-quarters they-took. At-night those other brothers that boy's
duw'arto b'i kh'ongoro tukhun'io andr'eni kor'i
door(-to) having-gone a-sword's edge inside having-made (=put)
d'ositani. 46. Hate br'aro- ten h'ui pr'ani ki: "B'eri nis'e,
they-seized. That brother-to they-shouted: "Outside come -out,

8. For: alani.

10. For: Kum'oru (nom.).

9. First: h'azir hot.

b'ol h'ai." 47. Hase bedaw'a bit'i, d'e du'arlo te
 an-army has-come." He confused having-become, having-run, the-door-to
 h'ai. 48. Khongoro tukhun'i h'ate d'ago j'u d'eki tor'i ch'initai.
 came. The-sword's edge that boy's two legs-to reaching cut-them.
 49. Hase d'ag hat'era th'or¹¹ h'oi. 50. Hate sh'ak brang'ini h'atogho, hate
 The boy there falling became. Those other brothers him that
 b'oko hate ist'oro sum 'i kori gan'i,
 wife (and) that horse-together-with having-assembled, having-taken,
 badsh'o g'ona bagh'ani. 51. T'ogho te ret'ani ki: "(I)sp'a hate plinz'o g'anitam,
 the-king-near went. Him-to they-said: "We that ball we-caught,
 hate kim'erio 'awetam. 52. T'a hase zh'au n'o 'betai."
 that woman we-took-away. Your that son not could (-do-it)."
 53. Ham'ush ret'ani. 54. Kand'uri m'uda ac'a hase kh'utu d'ag k'ano
 Thus they-spoke. Some time- after that lame boy a-tree
 m'ula por'i 'asitai. 55. J'u b'oik hate k'ana h'ani. 56. T'an m'uzhi
 -under asleep was. Two birds that tree-into came. Themselves-amongst
 l'u pr'ani: "H'aya d'ago d'ek chiti sh'er", re. 57. "H'amitan j'am
 they-spoke: "This boy's leg wounded is", saying. "For-them a-good
 w'ez sh'er." 58. Hase 'i bo'ik r'etai: "H'ase ky'aax?"
 medicine exists." That one (=other) bird asked: "That what-thing (-is)?"
 59. R'etai ki: "H'amush zhagh'a 'uts sh'er. 60. H'ate
 (The first bird) answered: "In-such a-place a-spring there-is. That
 'utso g'ona 'i j'osh sh'er. 61. H'atogho daph'ei h'e zaxm'ia diy'ar,
 spring-near a grass is. That having-crushed on-that wound he-shall-put,
 he 'utso ut'ar, h'es j'am b'oi." 62. D'ago k'ara
 into that spring he-shall-enter, he healed will-be." The-boy's ears
 pr'ai, l'ash biti corp'ongi dit'i h'ate 'utsa
 it-struck, light (=dawn) having-become on-all-fours creeping at-that spring
 t'oritai. 63. Hate j'osho daph'ei, tan h'ate zaxm'ia pr'ai,
 he-arrived. That grass having-crushed, on-his that wound he-put (-it),
 'utso 'utitai. 63. D'ek j'am h'oni, badsh'o gona
 into-the-spring he-entered. The-legs healed became, the-king-near
 h'ai. 65. Tan l'uan dr'ust pr'ai. 66. Badsh'a kab'ul
 he-came. His words (=tale) all he-gave (=told). The-king accepting
 ar'er. 67. Sh'ak zhizh'au chang'ak h'oni. 68. Badsh'a
 did (=believed him). (His-)other sons liars became. The-king
 h'atetan m'arital. 69. H'e zhau'o boh m'eher kor'i hal'citai.
 them killed. That son much favour having-shown he-kept (-with-him).

11. Or: pet's in hit, struck.

NOTES

2. *Olati*, prob. from *olat* village. — *Dish* bad < *dūṣya*.
3. *Ghec*, eye, of uncertain origin. Possibly, -*ec* might go back to *acchi*, with *cch* instead of expected *ççh*, as in several Dard and Kafir words for "eye", but what is then the "prefix" *gh*-?
5. *Chui* night, has a palatal affricate, and can scarcely be derived from *kṣap*. The obl. in -*o* is used temporally.—*Chuci* (*chucui*, etc.) morning.
9. *Yor-dik* sun-set. — *Wal* must be a sandhi form for **pāl* — *Hoi* became is here used as a futurum exactum. Cf. 29, *ganitai*.
12. *I* one, frequently used about "an (other)", "the other".
13. *Kim'eri* woman < *kumārīkā*, *kumoru* girl, apparently < **kumā-rakā* with short *a*. — *Gheca-dosh* "a pain at (= for) the eye", odious, hateful.
14. The postposition *tu* into, takes the nominative.
15. *Çokik* (*çakum*) to clasp, to take hold of, to begin.
17. *Detai* ran, but *deitai* (38) made run.
19. *Laa-koyan*. After an *o* the 3. Sing. ends in -*i*, not in -*ṛ*.—*Dro* is indefinite, *droo* (obl.) definite object.
26. *Ilase* points to the nom. *zhau*, not to the obl. *boko*.
28. *Zhūr* (with rising tone), Kal. *chu* (l-), *jhur* daughter < **juhūtā*. — *Sorum* gold, with -*m* from *drozum* silver. — *Pīnz* (also *pīnj*) polo-ball. Burushaski *plīnc*, etc.
35. *Tareik* is the caus. of *torik* to reach, to arrive at.
39. *Ushfuritai*. Wazir Ali Shah always writes *shṭ*. For derivation v. BSOS, 8, p. 664.
42. *Alani*, i.e., back to the princess.
45. *Tukhuni*, edge, from *tukhunu* sharp, with quite irregular development from *tīkṣṇa*. — *Dositani* they intended to catch him? "Imperfectum de conatu"?
55. *Boik* bird, < **vayī-kka*, cf. Skt. *vayas*.
60. *Josh* grass. Homonym of *josh* ten.
61. *Daph'eik* to crush, cf. Nep. *dapkāunu*.